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which they bear in each year to the total number of absolute divorces granted in that year. Working out the percentages upon the basis of the total divorces reported by M. Turquan we find that (except for the year 1884, for which both reports agree) they are not correct, whereas if we use the tables given in Mr. Wright's report we find the percentages to be correct so far as Mr. Wright's figures go. This seems to indicate clearly that the percentages given in this little table were based on totals differing from those used by M. Turquan in the remainder of the article and agreeing with those given by Mr. Wright. As a consequence of this serious discrepancy it seems doubtful whether M. Turquan's conclusions can be received with any considerable degree of confidence, the variations in figures being so serious as to make it entirely possible that a statement based throughout on the figures of the Ministry of Justice would give rise to different conclusions.

BENJAMIN F. KELLER.

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#### RELIEF OF THE POOR IN GERMANY.

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*L'Assistance Publique en Allemagne*, by Charles Grad, Deputy from Alsace to the German Reichstag, in *L'Economiste Français*, March 9, September 7, and October 5, 1889.

It has been frequently remarked that statistics of public relief tend to reflect rather the administration of the poor law than the condition of the population. An increase of the amount given annually may come from an increased amount of destitution, or a growth in wise generosity, or in unwise generosity, or from an increase of administrative awkwardness, extravagance, or corruption. It was while looking over the reports of the English Poor Law Commissioners that Carlyle wrote "Statistics, one may hope, will improve gradually and become good for something."

M. Grad is greatly interested in tracing the influence of the German guarantee of support to all Germans, and finds that under this ostensibly obligatory provision less is spent by the German poor law authorities in proportion to the population than in Alsace, or France, where relief can only be asked as a favor, and not claimed as a right. During the year 1855 the German empire under the law of obligatory assistance expended a total of 90,282,159 marks for public poor relief,

which was an average of 1 mark and 92 pfennigs for each inhabitant of the empire. During the same year Alsace-Lorraine, where the French principle of relief at the option of the local authorities still obtains, the expenses for similar objects amounted to 4,298,878 marks, or an average of 2 marks 74 pfennigs per inhabitant. M. Grad seems to think this a favorable showing for the voluntary principle of relief, but gives none of the subsidiary facts that would be necessary to establish the correctness of this view.

It is agreed on all hands that German poor relief is most inadequate in the rural districts. In the kingdom of Saxony in 1880, 645 rural communes (*Armenverbände*) were reported as giving no public relief at all. The number of persons relieved in the cities was twice as great in proportion to the population as in the country, and the figures for Prussia give about the same results. The three causes mentioned as mainly contributing to this result are (1) "rural hard-heartedness," (2) more healthful nature of country life, (3) defective administrative organization of the rural communes for purposes of public relief. Many of the communes are so small and poor that it is almost impossible for them to bear the burden of giving adequate relief; the places where there is the greatest destitution being also those least able to pay high taxes. This state of things tends to perpetuate itself, because the destitute inadequately provided for in the country avail themselves of the earliest opportunity of establishing themselves in a town. Another effect of inadequate public relief is that private relief increases. This is largely beyond the reach of the statistician, but is known to be often ill advised, spasmodic, and unsatisfactory.

The relation of the percentage of pauperism to the size of the city is indicated in the following table, based on reports from 77 municipalities: —

Cities.	Total of Population.	Persons Assisted.	
		Total.	Number per 1000 Inhabitants.
With more than 100,000 inhabitants....	877,383	57,158	65.1
Between 100,000 and 50,000 inhabitants.	879,632	56,172	63.9
Between 50,000 and 20,000 inhabitants...	599,243	30,072	50.2
With less than 20,000 inhabitants.....	477,293	22,648	47.5
Total.....	2,833,551	166,050	Average, 58.6

The town of Elberfeld in Western Prussia has given a new word to the nomenclature of charities. Wherever the "Elberfeld system" has been introduced the number of dependents and the cost of supporting them has decreased, and the causes of this result seem to be almost wholly commendable. The system is based upon the idea of the individualization of cases, a large number of visitors being employed, so that one visitor is never required to take charge of more than four cases. The most reliable statistics of urban poor relief come from cities where this method has been adopted, because a much larger fund of definite information is there collected. In Leipzig each dependent has a small record book devoted especially to his case, which contains among other matters the answers to thirty-two questions respecting his origin, means of support, relations, etc. The system was introduced in Leipzig in 1881, and in five years the number of out-door paupers was reduced from 14,575 to 9,277, though during the time the population of the city increased more than 20,000.

The classification of dependents according as the relief given is continuous or temporary is useful, as it is often found that while the number of all who receive relief decreases the proportion of those receiving continuous relief increases. The Germans also divide dependents into those who are helped because of their own needs (*Selbstunterstützte*), and those who receive help on account of their families (*Mitunterstützte*). A much larger proportion of the public poor relief in Germany is given to the poor in their own homes than with us, an economy made possible by better administrative methods.

In conclusion, it may be said that if the proof-reader has been as careless regarding the statistical tables inserted by M. Grad as in the correction of the German sentences used one ought not to base important conclusions on them without verification.

A. G. WARNER.

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#### PRISON STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES FOR 1880.

In the discussion upon the paper, published in No. 7, President Walker suggested that the unfavorable showing of the foreign born element might perhaps be more apparent than real. Among the foreign born the number of children is insignificant, and hence the table